

Congressman Jesse Jackson Jr. today said he strongly opposes SB 2981, as proposed by State Sen. Debbie Halvorson, because it would undermine the financial underpinning of the public-private partnership and stymie long-term growth of the Abraham Lincoln National Airport.

"We don't need legislation to build the airport. We need a lease and leadership from the Governor," Jackson said today. "I support the concept of a Development District **OUTSIDE** of the airport footprint. Halvorson's bill focuses **INSIDE** the airport and its operations. It is simply an airport killer."

"I'm asking Governor Blagojevich to oppose this legislation, which was not shared with me, or ALNAC or the private developers until this morning," Jackson added. "These legislative shenanigans are putting egos and control ahead of real jobs and the greater good of the people of Illinois."

Jackson noted that Illinois Attorney General Lisa Madigan's recent opinion stated that the State has the power to enter into a long-term land lease with the Abraham Lincoln National Airport Commission (ALNAC), which could then build the airport with private financing.

"We are one signature away from building the airport – the Governor's. We need a lease -- not legislation," Jackson said.

"SB 2981, as proposed, would have catastrophic implications on the

privately financed, market-based growth plan by taking away future potential revenues, which will drive away any private investors.

"The financial margins in the initial years are so thin, as with any business, and the potential loss of revenues in the initial years will be greatly impacted by this legislation. This bill taxes operations that are needed to support the airside bonds in the financial model advanced by LCOR and SNC-Lavalin, therefore, undermining the financial security and foundation of the private investors."

"Also, by taking revenue from the airport, we lose our low-cost carrier concept, which is what the market is demanding," Jackson said.

" A Development District makes sense only if it prevents someone from building a hotel and convention center where the second runway would go. This doesn't. I support a Development District so long as it protects the footprint and preserves our concept of a privately financed, low-cost carrier airport."